



# **AFSCME**

## **CONNECTICUT COUNCIL 4**

**Local 353 Blue Collar Union  
Waterbury, CT**



Stephen Laccone, President  
Marcy Michaud, Vice President  
Jerry Carroll, Recording Secretary  
Lenny Calo, Secretary-Treasurer

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Pat Iasevoli  
Mark Carlson  
Walter Tumel

### **TRUSTEES**

Paul Pastore  
Tom Gorman  
Dennis Lemieux

Honorable members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon. My name is Stephen Laccone and I come before you today not only as President of AFSCME Local 353 (the Blue Collar Union), but also as a City of Waterbury resident, employee, homeowner and taxpayer. I would like to comment on a few bills before you today.

First, I would like to speak on S.B. 848, AN ACT CONCERNING LOANS TO MUNICIPALITIES TO FULLY FUND PENSION SYSTEMS. As the former Labor Representative on the Waterbury Financial Planning and Assistance Board, I had the rare opportunity to oversee all financial aspects of our City Government, including detailed analysis regarding our unfunded pension liability. If this legislation is passed, it would be a great benefit to our Municipality in regards to budgetary assurances and potential tax decreases. It would assure the taxpayers and employees of our fine city that our elected representatives are mandated to keep its fiduciary responsibility toward the solvency of our pension fund.

If this bill becomes law and monies are allocated to allow us to bond our full liability, it would be a potential savings to our Municipality of tens of millions of dollars per year. This would allow both tax decreases and opportunities to begin the process of repairing our decrepit infrastructure. I strongly encourage this committee to pass this most vital legislation

The next bill I will comment on is H.B. 5707, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DIMINISHMENT OR ELIMINATION OF MUNICIPAL RETIREE BENEFITS. As an employee of the City of Waterbury, I have first hand knowledge of the devastating effects any reduction in benefits would have on a retiree. The Oversight Board imposed severe reductions in both medical benefits and pension payouts. With no cost of living increases, it has detrimentally altered our retiree's quality of life. I implore you to vote in favor of this bill and allow retirees to continue to receive the pay and benefits that they earned through their long tenure of employment with their respective Municipalities.

Finally I would like to comment on H.B. 6075, AN ACT CONCERNING RETIREMENT CREDIT FOR MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES WHO SERVED IN THE MILITARY. This legislation would allow all the brave men and women of our military to buy back their time served for pension purposes if they accepted employment with a Municipality. This is a benefit our employees enjoyed prior to the Oversight Board stripping this provision from our collective bargaining agreement during a time of war. I believe our veterans should be afforded this benefit in part for their dedication and sacrifice in keeping our citizens safe and free from enemy attack. I would ask that you vote in the affirmative on passage of this bill.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephen Laccone".

Stephen Laccone